

June 12, 2017

Joint Ways and Means Committee  
General Government Subcommittee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

*Re: Support Senate Bill 214 to Spur Research Capacity in Oregon*

Co-Chair Manning, Co-Chair Smith, and Members of the Committee,

We write to urge you to pass SB 214 with the -2 amendment, which would provide alternative retirement benefits to postdoctoral scholars in Oregon.

Postdoctoral scholar positions at Oregon State University, Portland State University, the University of Oregon, and Oregon Health & Science University provide critical temporary training opportunities for recent graduates with doctorates before they seek more permanent employment at universities or in the private sector. Postdoctoral scholars also provide vital research capacity for universities, playing key roles in the research projects of tenure-line faculty.

Postdoctoral scholars' positions are typically federally funded through research or training grants. For Oregon's research universities to be competitive for federal funding, they must be able to conduct research cost-effectively compared to peer institutions. One key challenge hampering the competitiveness of Oregon's universities is the high cost of non-salary other payroll expenses (OPE). Many universities provide postdoctoral scholars with cost-effective postdoc-tailored retirement programs. SB 214-2, along with the proposed amendments, would do the same for postdocs at Oregon's universities.

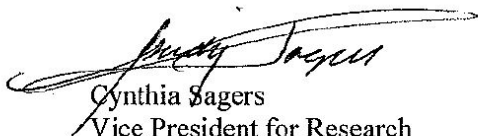
SB 214-2 would reduce the costs of postdoctoral scholars while still allowing the universities to provide postdocs a comparable level of benefits. Because postdoc positions are temporary, few if any postdoctoral scholars vest in the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) or the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP). This bill would exclude postdoctoral scholars from PERS and would allow ORP-eligible postdocs to contribute up to 4% of their salary and institutions to match these contributions up to 4%.

This bill, if passed, would increase the competitiveness of Oregon's research universities for federal research funds and would expand the number of postdoctoral scholars who facilitate research efforts across the state. We urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,



David Conover  
Vice President for Research and Innovation  
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Cynthia Sagers  
Vice President for Research  
Oregon State University



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